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UNCLAS ABUJA 000110

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR DS/OP/AF, DS/DSS/ITA, DS/DSS/OSAC
LAGOS FOR RSO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [ALOW](#)

SUBJECT: MOB SETS POLICE POST ABLAZE - ABUJA

11. (U) Summary: On 6 January 2002, a police post located at Apo Village, located approximately 10 kilometers from the Embassy, within the capital city of Abuja was set ablaze by a protesting mob.

12. (U) Details: The local news reported that the mob, numbering approximately 2,000, besieged the police post and set fire to it to protest the death of a suspected armed robber in police custody. The suspect was arrested with several others following a report of a robbery in the area in late December.

13. (U) The Abuja Police Public Relations Officer confirmed the incident. He said that the police raided some criminal hideouts in the village and arrested the deceased and other members of his criminal gang. He added that while in police custody, the deceased became ill and was taken to a private clinic where he was diagnosed as epileptic and later died. He confirmed that no life was lost in the fire but that police property was destroyed. He stated that the Criminal Investigations Division (CID) is investigating and that the Police Command would not relent in its effort to rid, not only Apo Village of criminals but also the entire capital city.

14. (SBU) Comment: Although this incident was not directed against official U.S. personnel, it is reported because it took place within the Abuja center city. Apo village is where the official residences of Nigeria's national legislators are located. The incident further demonstrates how quickly violent mobs form in Nigeria and documents the inability of police to adequately protect objects of violent protest, even when they are in the immediate vicinity of VIP housing.

Jeter